

# Cover Story

## Partners in Design

By: David Devers

Upcoming conference to showcase cabinet's best design work

Successful projects, more often than not, are rooted in successful partnerships. That will be a consistent message at this year's partnering conference of officials from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Kentucky, Federal Highway Administration and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), Aug. 18-20, at the Griffin Gate Marriott Resort and Spa in Lexington.

Some of the best design work produced in the Transportation Cabinet will be on display at the 13th annual conference during the KYTC Project Excellence Awards luncheon. That event showcases top of the line in-house project designs.

"Our winning project development teams illustrate the importance of skilled partnerships, both within the district office and between that office and the affected public," said Transportation Secretary Joe Prather. "Our planners and designers are also aware of the need to preserve the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic and natural resources of any area impacted by one of our projects."



**Top picture pre-construction and bottom picture is post-construction of U.S. 23 looking North**

While the conference has been held for well more than a decade, the first KYTC Project Excellence Awards luncheon took place in 2005. An award-winning District 12 team, which included John Michael Johnson and Mandy Collins-Justice, was honored



**John Michael Johnson and Mandy Collins-Justice, in 2005**

for successfully taking on the challenge of transforming a rural four-lane roadway with a flush median into a six-lane roadway.

Congestion relief and improved safety were major goals as the team sought to improve the most heavily traveled road in Eastern Kentucky (US 23), which passed through some of the most expensive property in Pike County. The project's most significant traffic and safety impact is a reduction of permitted cross-traffic left turns (other than signalized intersections) from 38 to three.

Last year a District 12 design team, including design engineer Chris James and project manager Mary Westfall-Holbrook, submitted another winning entry. Their project included improved lanes and shoulders on the narrow gravel road leading to Butcher Hollow (shown on cover) once the home of singer Loretta Lynn and now a tourism landmark in Johnson County. One section of the road was also designed to accommodate parking and turning near the Loretta Lynn home place. The remainder of the road was designed as an upgraded paved road with limited width changes.

In 2006, Tom Clouse managed a District 8 project which involved the reconstruction of US 25

to provide three-lane access from Interstate 75 to the Country Music Hall of Fame at Renfro Valley. The concept of Context Sensitive Design was incorporated into the project to make the work better fit in with the surrounding community.

Because of high pedestrian volume in the area, considerable attention was paid to options for pedestrians to safely cross US 25. The result was a pedestrian underpass leading from the ticket office to the Renfro Valley main theater on the other side of the highway.

The District 8 team was able to design the project so that it would easily comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and could be connected to an existing drainage system on the Renfro Valley property.

"This project exemplifies how the Transportation Cabinet can utilize

resources from a variety of disciplines to accomplish something everyone can be proud of," said Clouse. "It also shows just how valuable it is to communicate and partner with those who will be affected by the project."

District 2 personnel were already in pursuit of federal hazard elimination funding to address "Dead Man's Curve," a dangerous section of US 431 in Muhlenberg County, when a couple of fatal truck crashes put the project on the fast track. The photo below shows Dead Man's Curve.

"Every highway improvement project that comes through our office carries significance,"

wrote District 2 Chief District Engineer Ted Merryman, when the project was submitted for awards consideration. "Then there are those rare projects that immediately impact a community and bring a tremendous sense of accomplishment to the project team. This is certainly one of those rare projects."

The project Dead Man's Curve was reconstructed to meet the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials recommendations. In addition, traffic lanes and shoulders were widened to address the causes of many previous crashes.

The deadline is fast approaching to submit entries for the 2008 competition. All entry forms must be received by the director of highway design by July 31. □



**Construction and finished pictures of pedestrian underpass**



**"Dead Man's Curve"**



**Reconstructed "Dead Man's Curve"**